

the scars will heal by iridescentpetrichor

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Summary:

Billy's still standing at the door, putting his arm out to block you when you try to leave. You look up at him, stopping in your tracks. He looks overheated and out of it, so you take a careful step back.

"Are you," Billy's arm stays blocking the exit. "...Okay?"

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Working at the Hawkins Pool wasn't the most fun summer you'd ever had, but you really had to start saving up so you could move out of this shit town. With the sun beating down on you, you sighed, checking the time for the millionth time that day.

2:25

Five minutes until Steve arrives to take you to the mall. You two developed a routine over the summer where he takes his ten-minute break right when your shift ends so he can drive you to the mall to spend the rest of the day with him and Robin. You couldn't help but smile, waiting anxiously for Heather Holloway to take your spot on the highchair.

When you see her, she makes eye contact with you, nodding as you climbed down and headed off to shower. She wastes no times replacing your seat, watching over the kids running around the pool.

Running your hands through your hair, you sigh. You turned on the shower, letting the cool water wash over you. The water is refreshing compared to the hot summer's day outside, and you briefly lose track of time before snapping back to reality. Glancing at the clock, you curse under your breath, noting that Steve will be there in two minutes and *hates* when you're late.

You turn off the water, wrapping a towel over your red swimsuit and head towards the exit. Before you can leave, however, Billy Hargrove stumbles in. Instinctively, you step back, remembering the events of last fall like they were yesterday. You put your head down, grabbing a pair of shorts from your locker and turning to go find Steve's car.

Billy's still standing at the door, putting his arm out to block you when you try to leave. You look up at him, stopping in your tracks. He looks overheated and out of it, so you take a careful step back.

"Are you," Billy's arm stays blocking the exit. "...Okay?"

He doesn't respond, instead taking a dangerous step towards you, silently reminding how alone you are in the room.

Your eyes travel down, landing on the familiar black ink pulsing through his veins; creeping up his neck.

"Holy shit." You whisper, taking another step back, wracking your brain on what to do. When you look back to his face, Billy has an indecipherable look in his eyes. He lunges forward, and with a shriek, you jump back, slipping on the wet floor and falling *hard* to the ground. Your head slams against the tile, but you don't have time to react to the pain because Billy is still coming at you. His fist connected with your face, and you swore you saw stars.

Your hand flies up to strike Billy, but he catches your wrist, shoving it down to the cold floor. In an instant, his other hand closed in on your throat. Tears stung your eyes, and you brought your free hand up, scratching down his face. With a growl, Billy's grip tightened on your throat, barely flinching at the injury. Your mouth fell agape, gasping for air like a fish out of water.

You thought for sure that this would be the end, but a towel wraps around Billy's neck, pulling him off of you. He stumbled back, quickly regaining his balance and spinning around to face your savior. *Steve*. You sat up with a hand touching your already bruising neck, coughing as you struggled to inhale.

Steve threw a punch to Billy's face, knocking him to the side before reaching down and pulling you up off the ground. You took a step back, gripping the sleeve of Steve's shirt in a silent plea to get him to back down.

He ignored you, putting up both fists as if challenging Billy. You've seen this play out before, and that was before Billy was possessed by the Mind Flayer. This is not a fight Steve will win.

"Steve," your voice is still hoarse, and you gently tugged on his sleeve in the direction of the exit. He hesitated, risking a glance towards you as Billy approached. You nodded to the black ink inching its way up Billy's neck, and Steve froze.

“Shit.” He grabbed your hand, pulling you towards the exit.

Despite the pounding in your head, you and Steve managed to get out before Billy could react. The summer air of Hawkins that you’d complained so much about was the most refreshing thing you’d ever felt as the two of you ran to his car.

You took a glance behind you, seeing Billy standing in the doorway to the locker room, watching you for a moment before disappearing again.

Holy shit.

Steve unlocked his car, nearly dropping his keys in the process.

He climbed in, waiting anxiously for you to do the same. You slammed the door shut, and Steve was already peeling out of the parking lot.

“So, what, we have to deal with possessed Billy now?” Steve exclaimed, raising his voice in a mixture of anger and fear.

You nod, sinking into the car seat. Now that the fight is over, the pain washes over you full force. You glance down at the blood coating your nails from when you scratched him, running your thumb gently over them

When you looked back to the road, you saw Steve take a turn away from the mall.

“Don’t you have to get back to work?”

“Robin can hold down the fort for now, you’re my top priority right now.”

On the rest of the silent ride home, you saw Steve glancing your way out of the corner of your eye to make sure you were doing okay. When he finally pulled into his driveway you noticed both cars were missing – his parents must still be at work.

The two of you climb out of the car, Steve keeping an eye on you as you squeezed your eyes shut in pain while you followed him into the

house. He brought you upstairs into the bathroom, the routine all too familiar after years of fixing one another up after fighting monsters or racist abusers. When you walked in, you flinched at your own reflection in the mirror, not missing the frown Steve sent your way.

The bruises on your neck were more prominent than you expected, and there was drying blood on your cheek where Billy punched you.

“Could’ve been worse, I guess.” You joke halfheartedly, your pained laughter dying down when Steve gave you a look. He gently sat you down on the cool tile of the bathroom floor before fishing a first aid kit out of the cupboard under the sink.

“This’ll sting.” He mutters, wetting a cloth with hydrogen peroxide and dabbing your cheek with it. You hissed, hearing him utter a quiet apology.

He continued cleaning the cut on your cheek, oblivious to the lack of distance between you two. You, however, were painfully aware of how close he was to your face, a deep blush painting your cheeks. When his eyes flicked to yours, he hesitated, face reddening.

You stared at each other for what felt like hours before his hand gently came up and cupped your jaw. He leaned in slowly, giving you ample time to pull away. You didn’t, eyes fluttering shut as your lips collided. Neither of you could help the grin on your faces, smiling into the kiss. Eventually you had to pull away to catch your breath, your hand resting on his arm.

His hand stayed at your jaw, smile widening. “I’ve wanted to do that for so long.”

“Me too.” You laughed, both of you forgetting about Billy to focus on the peace of being with each other.